

AGMAGINE

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How Technology Affects our Careers



It would be inappropriate to go to press without recognizing the victory for many of our members and all supporters of civil rights from the Supreme Court's decision on Marriage Equality (*Obergefell v Hodges*).

AGMA Establishes a New System for Reporting Illegal Discrimination

By Alan S. Gordon, National Executive Director



AGMA has established a system for members to confidentially report instances of any illegal discrimination, including sexual abuse, harassment and conduct that creates a hostile work environment.

A number of members, including participants in young artist programs, have reported to us allegations of inappropriate sexual harassment of various types.

Discrimination is not only illegal, it's also a violation of every AGMA collective bargaining agreement. Sexual abuse and harassment are atrocious, and taking advantage of artists who are afraid of the implied threat of retaliation is the most heinous sort of discrimination.

Although in the past 15 years we've received only three complaints about any such abuse, some anecdotal reports allege that conductors, coaches, choreographers and ballet masters, all of whom can effectively make hiring recommendations, comprise the most frequent category of abusers.

The most effective means of stopping harassment is to report it to your employer. Every AGMA signatory company has a policy prohibiting all manner of discrimination and is legally obligated to thoroughly investigate such complaints and take action to remedy discrimination.

In the real world, we're aware that most performers, singers and dancers, whether they are new to the business or seasoned artists, are afraid that if they file a complaint they expose themselves to some form of direct or indirect

retaliation. Unfortunately, it's a valid fear. However, reporting abuse or harassment to your employer remains one of the ONLY two truly effective ways of dealing with sexual abuse or other illegal discrimination.

The other possible remedy exists because discrimination is also a violation of AGMA's collective bargaining agreements and Standard Artist Agreements, and so it can also be pursued through the grievance and arbitration provision of our contracts and decided by an arbitrator. But, again, this requires an actual complaint to us so that we can file a grievance on your behalf, and as is the case when making a report to your employer, requires that you personally make the accusation.

Another alternative to personally making an accusation is for AGMA to establish a confidential reporting system, pursuant to which members could confidentially report instances of sexual abuse, harassment or conduct that creates a hostile work environment without their identity becoming known to employers.

This is the manner in which the system will work: We've established a private e-mail address (AGMAREPORTS@aol.com) to which only myself and Deborah Allton-Maher, another AGMA attorney, will have access. Any member may report any allegation of discrimination, abuse or harassment. Members MUST include their names, which we will not disclose to anyone. While some members may be troubled that such complaints are not wholly anonymous, we need to be certain that reports are made only by members. AGMA will keep each member's name confidential to the fullest extent of the law.

In making a report, the member should obviously report the identity of the employer; the name of the person doing the inappropriate

act; the nature of the abuse, harassment or discrimination; the employment position of that person (composer, coach, etc.); their work relationship to the person making the report (unless it's obvious from their position); whether or not there were witnesses to the situation, including their names or identification by job titles; and any other information you think relevant to the report. Although members can report abuse encountered at non-union companies, we have no ability to influence behavior among non-union employers. Nonetheless, because conductors, coaches, choreographers and ballet masters often also work at AGMA companies, such reports may be helpful.

Once we've received multiple complaints about a particular individual we will notify the employer involved or, if appropriate, the prospective employers of that individual, regarding the kinds of inappropriate behavior in which the individual has allegedly engaged and we will urge the employer to conduct an investigation.

I have to repeat, however, that (1) we will keep confidential the identity of any member making a report, and (2) although retaliation may be difficult to prove, and members are frightened about the possibility, the only thing that's likely to have real success in preventing sexual abuse or harassment is the filing of a complaint with the employer.

If you need help, or want to report abuse, e-mail AGMAREPORTS@aol.com.

Some members asked AGMA to "establish a no-harassment policy." Only an employer can establish such a policy, and in fact most employers have established a formal policy already. If you want to make a formal complaint, ask us and we can find out the name of

(continues on page 6)

You Kids Get Offa My Lawn!



FROM THE
PRESIDENT
JAMES ODOM

Technology.

Bear with me here for just a minute. In spite of what some of you think (you know at whom I am looking), I do not just sit down, place my hands on the keyboard and have an endless stream of pearls of wisdom, *bon mots*, epigrams, and quotes from Grandma Beck flow from beneath my fingertips. Well, actually, that is sort of how it happens, but a lot of sifting goes on before I decide that I should quit while I'm still behind. What this means in real life is that I may start a dozen times and write several thousand words before I discover what it is that I actually want to say. Or at least something that might have a point to it. Somewhere.

This means that I have written several thousand words on the topic of technology, some of which were amusing. (At least to me. Example: I'm not posting selfies on Instagram because, as Grandma Beck would have said, "If I wanted to see your face every time I turned around, I wouldn't have thrown that quilt over your head!") But I kept getting stuck. And then I finally (three weeks after deadline) realized that the problem was no matter where I started I was ending up in the same place.

I have become that old man who sits on his porch, shakes his cane at the neighbor children and screams, "You kids get offa my lawn!"

So. Let's try this again.

Technology.

In general, I'm for it. But it's a two-edged sword. I think what we have to be aware of is the cost of new technologies. Text messages are a great way to communicate with different departments during a rehearsal. They also are distracting and can make it difficult to focus on the task at hand, and can easily bleed into the problem of never really ending your work day. New technologies for lighting and sets can lead to stunning productions, but can also create new safety issues for the performers and crew. Every performance now starts with an announcement reminding the audience to turn off or silence their communication devices. (I find it somewhat distressing that this announcement has to be made backstage, as well.)

The first time I saw an audition notice that asked for a recording submission was in the 1990s. At that time, people were scrambling to find places and ways to make recording of high enough quality to submit. Now almost everyone has a digital recorder of some sort in their hand and can make a high quality recording almost anywhere. (It certainly has made pirating performances easier.) Universities are actually setting up "audition labs" in which students learn how to create audition videos. I am now hearing that rather than asking for a submission of recordings prior to auditions, Artists are simply being asked if they have performance clips posted on their websites or on a YouTube channel. This means that Artists are now worrying about having the best website possible and obtaining those clips in order to post them.

I think my point here is that, as with all things in life, we need to find balance. Embrace the new, but be aware of the consequences. Don't dismiss the old merely because it's old. Sometimes simplest is best.

Now, you can play on my lawn, but stay out of the flowerbeds! ♦

HELP AGMA GO GREEN!

Help AGMA help the environment and make our communications with you more efficient at the same time. We are trying, as much as we can, to shift all of our member communications to electronic methods. This means we need your help. Please make sure that we have a current email address for you. Some information has to be distributed by hard copy mail, so while you're at it, make certain your regular mailing address is current as well. You can check the information by going to the AGMA website (musicalartists.org) and logging onto the Members Only section. Click on "Personal Record" then choose "Modify My Record" from the "Choose" drop down list.

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Editor Denise Baker

Correction: Rebecca Steinke of the San Diego Opera Chorus was incorrectly identified as Rebecca Harris. *AGMAZine* apologizes for this error.

In This Issue

By Tim Smith, *MMRC Acting Chair, AGMA Governor and Chorister*



Our current issue, “How technology affects our careers,” was inspired by a discussion at a Membership and Member Relations Committee (MMRC) meeting. We were talking about how we use different methods and platforms to communicate both in our personal and professional lives. We knew that we were not alone, and that it might be nice to share this discussion with the membership at large.

Technology, when used properly, is a great way to communicate and educate or simply share the latest cat video.

Our National Executive Director, Alan Gordon, starts us off with an announcement of a new mechanism for members to report instances of illegal discrimination in the workplace. President Jimmy Odom writes of the need to find balance in using technology. Our Day in the Life series highlights perspectives from Directors Paul Curran and Garnett Bruce.

Soloist Suzanne Mentzer shares her perspective on how social media has changed. Maren Montalbano, Philadelphia Chorister, writes of some of the social media tools that have helped her throughout her singing career. Ballet West Dancer Allison DeBona follows-up on her social media outreach and how it can be beneficial (if not required) for companies to do so as well. Jonathan Waterfield, a Metropolitan Opera Stage Manager, shares an insightful glance into how technology has evolved on the stage. Rodell Rosel, Soloist, talks about exposure and networking in the social media age. Osceola Davis, Soloist, reminds us that the “old-fashioned way” still works.

Of course there are plenty of *AGMAZine*’s regular features such as: Area News, In Memoriam, and results of the Metropolitan Opera’s bake sale which benefited the AGMA Relief Fund. There is an appeal to members to keep their contact information current. We also congratulate the only AGMA member this year to win a Union Plus scholarship.

In addition to this issue of *AGMAZine*, do not forget to check out AGMA on the web (www.musicalartists.org), AGMA on Facebook and AGMA on Twitter (@AGMusicalArtist). Stay connected to your colleagues; get involved with your union; consider serving as a delegate in your shop or joining your contract negotiating team. AGMA grows stronger with your valuable input. As always, we invite you to write an article for *AGMAZine* and include some photographs to go with your article. All submissions should be sent for consideration to dbaker@musicalartists.org.

That being said, we would like to SEE YOU! We would like photos of AGMA members doing AGMA work—please share with us rehearsal and backstage photos. Reach out to your managements for backstage or rehearsal shots, as well, so we get a good representation from across the country.

This issue would not have been possible without all of the members who contributed articles and pictures; I am appreciative that you took the time to share your stories with us. I must also express my extreme gratitude to the Membership and Member Relations Committee and AGMA’s Denise Baker for their tireless work on this issue. All involved are hoping that YOU, the membership, enjoy it thoroughly. Thank you so much, everyone, for your part in making this issue a reality—and enjoy the Summer!

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Executive Director's Report *(continued from page 2)*

the person authorized to receive and investigate such complaints.

Other members have asked us to describe, in greater detail, what kind of behavior is prohibited and how best to avoid sexual harassment.

First and foremost, use common sense. Becoming intoxicated at a company social function or getting into a car with an obviously intoxicated person puts you at risk.

Avoid fraternizing to any degree with anyone who has the ability to make or recommend hiring decisions—it may make you uncomfortable, but it avoids potential problems.

Members also want to know what kinds of conduct are prohibited by employer policies.

AGMA signatory employers are obligated to maintain a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. A typical no-discrimination policy applies to the working relationships between employees and any others with whom contact is necessary to perform the employer's business.

Federal, state and local laws and AGMA contracts require employers to maintain a work environment free from discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, marital status or any other category protected by federal, state, or local law, with regard to any term or condition of employment. More specifically, it is AGMA's policy to have all employment decisions in AGMA contracts based solely on an individual's qualifications, abilities and performance, without regard to personal traits. This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including hiring, training, performance reviews, promotions, discipline, or non-reengagement.

This policy also applies to all work-related settings and activities, whether inside or outside the employer's facilities, and business-related social events. None of an employer's property (telephones, copy machines, facsimile machines, computers, and computer applications such as e-mail and Internet access) may be used to engage in improper conduct.

Neither signatory employers nor AGMA tolerate any form of unlawful harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is offensive, affects morale, and interferes with the effectiveness of our work.

Sexual harassment is behavior directed towards one or more male or female employees on the basis of gender, and can include sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for future employment decisions affecting an individual;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance;
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working environment.

While it's not possible to define precisely what type of conduct will create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working environment, it may include verbal abuse or insults of a sexual nature, inappropriate physical touching, sexual jokes or other references of a sexual nature, display or circulation of sexual pictures or other materials, inquiry regarding another employee's sexual experiences or activities, and other similar offensive conduct.

It is also against policy to engage in verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of his or her race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, or other protected category (or that of the person's relatives, friends, or associates) that:

- Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive working environment;

- Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance;

- Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Depending on the circumstances, and under AGMA contracts—even if not in violation of a law—the following conduct may constitute discriminatory harassment based on an individual's race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, or physical or mental disability: epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, jokes, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, and/or written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility towards an individual or group that is circulated in the workplace or placed anywhere in the employer's premises, such as on an employee's desk or workspace, or on the employer's equipment or bulletin boards.

Both your employer's policy and ours is to encourage each employee to come forward with any complaints of sexual or other harassment and/or to cooperate in any investigation of harassment. This policy and the law prohibits retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint of sexual or other harassment or for cooperating in the investigation of such a complaint, and any retaliation will not be tolerated.

A typical no-discrimination policy requires that the employer investigate any reported incident promptly and thoroughly. While each investigation will proceed as the particular circumstances warrant, an investigation will—at a minimum—involve an interview with the employee making the complaint and interviews with persons identified as witnesses or otherwise having knowledge of the incident or conduct. All people involved in the investigation will be instructed to treat the investigation as confidential and not to discuss the allegations with others, particularly those not involved in the incident or conduct. In addition, all people included in the investigation will be informed that it is unlawful and the employer will not tolerate any form of retaliation directed towards anyone who makes a complaint or who participates or cooperates in an investigation.

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#WhatISangLastNight

By Susanne Mentzer, Soloist



Early in my career of 34 years, social media was known as telephones and fax machines.

Today it is a whole new world. Promotion then was left to managers and public relations people, particularly if a singer was signed with one recording label. Now, self-promotion is the rule. Every singer has a website, a Facebook page and a Twitter account, at the very least. I use my Facebook account more than my website to post updates to my sched-

ule or post links to press and other information. I also use Twitter but only occasionally. Because I also wear the hat of a writer, I frequently use these sites to post links to my articles on the *Huffington Post*.

I do wonder, though, how many people have the time to read all the information that is put out there. I know that people have certain favorite blogs that they follow. I find it hard to keep up. I do really like being able to stay in touch with colleagues and students as well as former students via Facebook.

It might be interesting to know how many managers and artistic directors look up artists online to see if they might like to have them audition. I am not sure how all of the social media affects having a great career or not. It really comes down to how you sing.

That said, I sure do know a lot more about who is doing what where due to the immediacy of social media. I no longer need to wait for *Opera News* to arrive. The downside to seeing what every other mezzo is doing and where is that I am not doing it. (Insert laugh here!) ♦

LOL!? Social Media and the DIY Career

By Maren Montalbano, Philadelphia Area Chorister



@Beech Oellers

“I just don’t get the Twitter thing. What is it supposed to do?”

If I had a dime every time someone asked me this question, I’d be able to buy stock in Twitter and make millions.

I don’t have a really good answer to that question, by the way. I just know that when I update my Twitter, Facebook, and other social media feeds, more people pay attention to what I’m doing. And when more people pay attention, I’m more likely to land a job.

I don’t have an agent, so when I’m out there hustling for jobs, it’s just me doing my own PR. Before we had the Internet, we freelancers had to make cold calls, send headshots and résumés in the mail, and stop by agents’ offices. I was encouraged by my college “Career Skills” professor to regularly send postcards to my industry contacts updating them on what I was doing with my career.

That was in the mid-1990s, when the Internet was in its infancy. I remember thinking it might be better to start writing regular emails to my friends and family (the only “industry contacts” I had at the time), and it started turning into a bit of a newsletter. That newsletter eventually turned into a blog, and I ultimately got so comfortable with the web platforms available out there that I built my own website.

As I began to blog more regularly, I started learning fancy terms like SEO (search engine optimization), which essentially means that the more links are pointing to your site, the higher you rise in Google’s ranking. So if you Tweet something that has a link to a post on your website, that link, whether or not people click on it, goes into the algorithm that makes your site more important in a Google search.

People use Facebook to keep in contact with their friends. They use LinkedIn to update their work résumés. Twitter is used as a catch-all for everything else, from political grandstanding to snarky observations about someone on the train. Me? I use it to market my performances, but subtly; I post pictures from backstage or talk about how excited I am about an upcoming performance. I Tweet to other singers and composers, creating public conversations about music.



I still send out e-newsletters to my industry contacts. I also blog (although not as often as I would like), and my blog posts from time to time have garnered a good deal of attention from the Internet. I keep samples of my singing up-to-date on SoundCloud, which is embedded in my website.

I continuously update my web presence—on SoundCloud, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and WordPress—and that, in turn, has led to my name becoming more prominent on the web. Try it: Google “Mezzo-soprano Philadelphia” and see what pops up. I’ve gotten more gigs this year from non-traditional contacts than ever before. And I hope this trend continues, because I like being in charge of my own PR...even if it means I have to write my own press releases from time to time. ♦

Ballet's Pirouette into Social Media

By Allison DeBona, Ballet West Dancer



There has been a lot of debate over what ballet needs to be doing to stay relevant. A regal art form with a rich past of elegance and timeless beauty, there has been a lot of debate over what ballet needs to be doing to stay relevant. Is it enough for us to depend on “business as usual” or do we need to embrace how the world is changing and be okay with adapting to the social media explosion? My vote is for the latter.

I am a First-Soloist at Ballet West in Salt Lake City, Utah. We filmed two seasons of the reality TV series, “Breaking Pointe” on the CW. I personally saw a huge shift in work opportunities while the show was airing. All of my work was through connections I was making on social media, particularly Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. When Ballet West received word that we were not going to get renewed for a third season of “Breaking Pointe,” my brother Jared (who is a PR genius disguised as a lawyer) and I started to come up with a plan for me to use my social media prowess to continue to have a presence in the ballet community and beyond. I’ve had much success over the past three years trying to continue my social media outreach, thus resulting

in paid side jobs. For example, partnerships with national and international companies like Degree Women’s, James Jeans, Muk Luks, The Elephant Pants and more. I then approached Ballet West and told them they needed to be doing this, too.

Ballet West gained a lot of exposure from the TV show, but many wanted more dancing. Well, I insisted we give it to them! I started Ballet West’s Instagram in January of 2014 and within a year grew the followers to 12K. Twitter now has 16.5K followers and their Facebook has close to 30K “likes.” Often, when paying for a PR plan can be costly, it is my belief that when used correctly, the use of “free” marketing through social media tools is immeasurable. Recently, Ballet West expanded their social media reach by including the live-streaming app, Periscope. Our first video of an in-studio rehearsal drew a crowd from around the world. Ballet is very popular in mainstream media, currently, due to the success of individuals like Misty Copeland. She has managed to embrace the fast-paced world of social media while maintaining the integrity on stage to keep the live art of ballet true to its roots. There is no reason why companies cannot do the same. You can follow Ballet West on Instagram and Twitter @balletwest1, and my personal professional journey, @allidebona.

The main reason we all dance is to share our love for the art with the world...I’ll see you on Twitter. ♦



Raven Wilkinson, an African American who danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (1955-61) presented flowers to Misty Copeland onstage at the Metropolitan Opera after Ms. Copeland’s debut in American Ballet Theatre’s Swan Lake. Misty Copeland recently became the first female African American to be promoted to the rank of Principal Dancer with the American Ballet Theatre. Misty Copeland can be followed on her website <http://www.mistycopeland.com/>

Executive Director’s Report (continued from page 6)

If the investigation determines that any individual has engaged in conduct that either constitutes harassment or otherwise violates the employer’s policies or rules of conduct, appropriate remedial or disciplinary action must be taken. Such actions could include (among others): eliminating contact between the employees involved in the incident, mandating training and/or counseling, or termination of the harasser. Also, the employer will meet with the employees involved to make certain that any improper conduct has stopped, and that there has been no discrimination or retaliatory action against the person who made the complaint.

The importance of following your employer’s policy cannot be emphasized enough.

An environment free of sexual and other harassment is not only the law, it is fundamental to how we exist. We hope that, if you believe you have been harassed, you will immediately bring the matter to the attention of the employer or, at least, to AGMA REPORTS.

Reporting offensive conduct to your employer is the best and most effective way in which to prevent inappropriate and illegal conduct.

Employees should understand that most typical workplace interactions will not be considered unlawful harassment under this policy. More specifically, job performance instructions and disciplinary action are not, by themselves, evidence of the creation of a hostile work environment that is unlawful. Conduct

will be considered to be unlawful harassment if it is based on the employee’s gender and either results in a tangible adverse employment action or is sufficiently severe and pervasive as to create a hostile work environment.

AGMA signatories believe that they have created a fair complaint resolution process and will be able to work together with AGMA members to avoid the escalation of any inappropriate situation involving sexual or other harassment and to avoid any type of retaliation.

If you need help, or want to report abuse, e-mail AGMAREPORTS@aol.com.

If we don’t know about a problem, we can’t begin to solve it. ♦

NOTICE TO PRINCIPAL ARTISTS:

Most AGMA collective bargaining agreements contain provisions for the payment of specific per diem/expense money amounts. The Met and Chicago Lyric are exceptions. Your agent did not negotiate those payments for you, AGMA did, and agents are NOT entitled to charge you a commission on those amounts, which are sent out in most contracts, either in specific dollar amounts or by reference to IRS regulations.

When your agent negotiates an all-inclusive or “global” fee, your agent is, in fact, charging you a commission on money that he or she did not negotiate for you and is thus NOT entitled to charge you a commission on the entire all-inclusive or “global” fee.

If your agent is unwilling to make the arithmetic calculation, then you should do it your-

self, by subtracting the per diem amounts specified in the collective bargaining agreement from the all-inclusive or “global” fee, and ascertain the balance, which is the correct commissionable amount.

All AGMA collective bargaining agreements are available to you in the Members Only section of the AGMA website. If you need help making the calculations, contact Candace Itow in the AGMA office at (212) 265-3687.

Your agent deserves the full commission on the amounts he or she negotiates for you, BUT that does not include the per diem amounts specified in the collective bargaining agreement AGMA has with the opera that employs you because your agent did not negotiate those amounts for you.

If your personal contract has N/A in the per diem section, that is an indication that your agent may be charging you an excessive commission.

We understand that no singer wants to be in an adversarial relationship with their own agent, but your agent should agree to do the right thing and not charge a commission on the per diem amounts specified in the collective bargaining agreements.

If you need help explaining this to your agent, write to me at AGMANY@aol.com or call me at (212) 265-3687.

Alan Gordon
National Executive Director

2014 Metropolitan Opera Bake Sale

By Linda Mays, AGMA Relief Fund, Director of Development



this was accomplished during the busiest part of the chorus season—right before and after Thanksgiving.

A crucial aspect of the Bake Sale and Food Vendor Sale was the recruitment of family, friends, and Met retirees who tirelessly



Bake sale helpers Holly White, Meaghan Sand and Amanda Tarver

worked to use brains, brawn and beautification skills to set up the room, price and display the baked goods and silent auction offerings, and to actually work the sales as the working choristers were called to the stage. It was a very exciting display of coordination and camaraderie. These heroes were Ross Benoliel, Bethany Davis, Christine DiGiallondo, Michael Fries, Travis MacArthur, Meaghan Sand, Amanda Tarver, Jane Thorngren, Holly White, Carole Wright and cashier extraordinaire, McManus

Woodend. The bakers were Maria D’Amato, Christine DiGiallondo, Laura Fries, Terry Ganley, April Haines, Doris Haines, David Lowe, Rob Maher, Brandon Mayberry, Asako Nagasaki, Rose Nencheck, Anne Nonnemacher, Martine Ogawa, Jenny Rossetti, Carolyn Sielski, Marie Te Hapuku and Meredith Woodend.

The very successful Silent Auction consisted of the following: World-Class culinary masterpieces; a famous family recipe; Hula lessons for seven people; a guitar lesson; an art lesson; a Tiffany wine carafe; Met Memorabilia from opera singers Sutherland, Melchior, Milanov, Albanese, Bampton and Novotná; *’Twas the Night Before Christmas* book (autographed by Nathan Gunn); a chocolate turkey centerpiece; a gift certificate to Alice’s Tea Cup; a two-hour Organizational Consultation; a gift certificate for the Italian restaurant Machiavelli’s; and Lamingtons, an Australian/New Zealand dessert. Contributors to the Silent Auction included Joyce DiDonato, Deborah Cole, Laura Fries, April Haines, Judy Kahn, Ashley Logan, Linda Mays, Asako Nagasaki, Anne Nonnemacher, Will Saive, Christopher Schaldenbrand, Marie Te Hapuku, Jane Thorngren, Robert Tuggle and Eduardo Valdez.

There were so many generous AGMA choristers, soloists, stage managers, members of SAG-AFTRA, IATSE Local #764 dressers, Met management and staff who contributed to the success of these events, it is entirely possible that we may have failed to thank some vital contributors.

Thank you to ALL who helped to promote the success and mission of the AGMA Relief Fund, through your generosity, hard work, creativity and great sense of fun!!!! ♦

What Price Stage Technology?

By Jonathan Waterfield, Metropolitan Opera Stage Manager



Do you Tweet? What about Facebook? You must own a computer, surely—or maybe an iPad, or at the very least a cell phone? We’re surrounded by technology, and, like it or not, it has a huge impact on our lives. Those of us who live and work in the Arts, especially opera and dance, probably don’t consider ourselves especially reliant on much of this modern wizardry in our work. Sure, you keep in touch on your phone, check emails from your agent on your tablet, maybe even get a handle on a new role by watching YouTube videos or listening on your iPod; but once you’re out there, on stage, facing the audience, it’s just you and your body... your voice... your talent... right?

Technology surrounds us onstage—some of it you can see, but much of it you can’t. As a performer you can probably ignore much of it (or try to!), and simply use what might be of help to you. As a Stage Manager (SM), my colleagues and I don’t have that same luxury. We are coordinators, we sit at the center of everything that happens onstage, with hopefully some control over the proceedings—especially when things don’t go according to plan! Imagine trying to do that without much of the technology we have at our disposal nowadays. Computer and audio/visual assistance is often vital to what we do, but these advancements in technology can be a double-edged sword!

When I started some 35 years ago, the first companies I worked for did not even have any communications worked out for their Stage Management! The person sitting at the SM desk calling cues was hard-wired in to the Lighting Control, and that was it! All other cues were given on cue lights, so if something went wrong, it was pretty much everyone for themselves. Maybe you could phone up to the Rail, but otherwise you just pressed a button and hoped all would go well. That’s unthinkable now. We’re connected to EVERYBODY, at least we certainly are at the Met. When I’m calling a show these days, I wear a

headset over which I can hear upwards of ten different channels—Lighting Designer, Lighting Control, Onstage electrics, Followspots, Carpenters, Rail, Sound, Video, Automation, Stage Managers and Directors. If I turn a particular channel off, I can’t hear the people on the other end if there’s a problem; if I leave them all on, it can sound like Bedlam! Each channel basically only hears themselves and maybe a Head of Department—I hear everyone... AT THE SAME TIME! If you ever see a Stage Manager with a look of total bewilderment on their face, or don’t understand why they’re not responding when you’re asking them a question (especially in rehearsal), spare a thought to the cacophony which is probably coursing around their brain.

Our recent “Ring” Cycle made us all painfully aware of how technology affects everyone onstage. It was a steep learning curve, from the sometimes difficult intersection of practical, computerized and physical effects, to the immense distrust many of the singers had of the infamous “machine” which had to be allayed, despite the inevitable mishaps and problems. With the increase in the use of computer-controlled machinery on our stages, communication is vital—at least the new technologies made it much easier to alert people, for instance when the “machine” malfunctioned, allowing us to both reassure singers that all was safe when something went wrong, but also to stop quickly and effectively when it was not safe to continue.

Technology allows us to do some pretty amazing things, but it can restrict us in other ways. Many people don’t appreciate how much time stage management spend with singers during rehearsals and performances, encouraging and generally reassuring them so that they can do their best work. The mistrust of much of the technology we are using has a huge impact on that. That technology has to be explained and often demonstrated to everyone before rehearsals can begin—does that concern people or reassure them? What toll does it take on the available rehearsal time? The more technology we use, the more

chances it will malfunction, and the advantages of having a certain effect happen identically each time because of computerization or automation are often offset by the time wasted when things won’t work, or simply can’t be fixed and/or solved on the spot because of the need for reprogramming rather than a simple physical repair. Sometimes, as with noisy color-scrollers on lamps, or the distracting noise of fans cooling projection equipment, it’s the disruption and distraction that the technology exudes which becomes the problem as much as the solution.

Much of the technology we use is on a smaller, less-intrusive level, but none-the-less both useful and also problematic when it goes wrong. All documents and plots used to run a show and communicate information are now computerized and therefore easily updated and redistributed. However, slow hard drives, computer glitches and crashes are as common for us as they are for you at home—a spilt cup of coffee should still leave a paper copy legible for transcribing, a crash or glitch can totally eradicate hours of work. The Met is looking into converting much of its sheet music into digital files, and some of my colleagues have started working on and saving their scores digitally. Calling a show directly from an iPad or other computer is already a possibility, although a hardware crash could easily stop the show—at least a paper score is harder to compromise during a performance. We actually already have a computer built into the Met SM Desk, but that is so we can access our files easily, and updating can be done on the go. It’s only a matter of time, though!

Technology rears its head in other ways too. The bane of our lives, as people who are trying to regulate the stage, is the increase in the use of handheld devices and cell phones. How wonderful that a chorus member can load their music onto a tablet for use during an offstage chorus, but what about when that tablet starts to be used onstage for checking emails? It’s great that Wardrobe can communicate via texting with their dressers during busy rehearsals when they’re spread over several floors of the house—not so good when

that cell phone rings during a quick change onstage! AGMA is very protective of its members' work being stolen via audio or video recording, but everyone now possesses a phone which is able to do exactly that. Where is the line to be drawn between a singer recording their scene for the purposes of self-appraisal, and a backstage recording of an opera scene which mysteriously appears on YouTube via a third party? This is a problem we should be aware of collectively. The Met does not officially allow personal devices on the stage, but who should be patrolling this new frontier? I speak for all of my colleagues when I say I'm unhappy that it seems to be us—and ONLY us!

With its expansion into the world of "live" Hi-Def broadcasting, the Met has become especially aware of its product being stolen. I'm sure General Manager Peter Gelb is delighted if a couple of leaked pictures increases the buzz about an upcoming broadcast—we have a Press Department that regularly sends out backstage and rehearsal shots into the blogosphere—but what if those leaked shots feature one of the all-too-familiar disagreements which arise during rehearsal, or an unfortunate accident or embarrassing incident for a singer? Again, due to technology, the line between enticing insights into a



Met Stage Managers Jonathan Waterfield, Cristy Langan and Margo Maier-Moul at the Stage Manager desk before a Hi-Def broadcast of L'Elisir D'Amore.

fascinating process, and actionable intrusion into a rehearsal which should be private, is becoming ever more blurred.

The Met is not alone in broadcasting its content on different forms of media—it is a great way of widening the appeal of your product. Many of us have been used to coordinating both radio and TV transmissions for years, but the added intrusion of multiple cameras has certainly created tension and problems. Many of our audience find the cameras and operators distracting out in the auditorium. Backstage, our famed interviews and filming of scene changes have become a big lure for

the Hi-Def movie audiences, but to say the technological advancement which allows these insights comes without a cost, would simply be untrue. For every interview you see between our host and a couple of the singers, you don't see the phalanx of TV, Media and Met crew who follow the camera around the stage. They get in the way during scene changes, they often have no conception of where or where not is an appropriate place to stand, and we usually have to work around them, rather than the other way about. Is it worth it? Absolutely! The finished project allows an insight into what we do which has given many people a new reason to watch our broadcasts... however there is a price to pay!

It's such a cliché, but this ever-changing new technology, which we all embrace on stages around the world, is a Pandora's Box. For every advance, there's a drawback, for every astonishing new effect there's usually a trade-off. The core of what performers do, using their bodies, voices and emotions to inspire and entertain people, is probably never really going to change, but the environment in which you do it is in a constant state of flux. Embrace the advances and new technologies, and it can enhance what you do, but at the same time, be aware of the price that sometimes must be paid. ♦

Union Plus Scholarship Program Awards \$3,000 to AGMA Member

Congratulations to Elizabeth Coker, the only AGMA member awarded a Union Plus scholarship this year. Elizabeth is a doctoral student in biobehavioral sciences at Teachers College of Columbia University. Elizabeth danced professionally for 15 years and worked full-time throughout her graduate studies. Her study aspect is doing 3-D motion capture research on professional dancers that has the potential to benefit individuals with balance impairment, such as those with Parkinson's disease or cerebral palsy and those undergoing post-stroke rehabilitation, as well as the aging and those on the autism spectrum. Now an adjunct professor of dance technique, somatic practice and dance science at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, she is a member and co-artistic director of the Seán Curran Company. Elizabeth states that she is grateful for AGMA's efforts to protect dancers' safety through work rules like limiting hours of consecutive rehearsals.

Union Plus recently awarded \$150,000 in scholarships to 106 students representing 36 unions, including the only winner representing the American Guild of Musical Artists, in the 2015 Union Plus

Scholarship Program. In this 24th year of the program, more than 5,000 applications were received from union members, their spouses and their dependent children in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Union Plus Scholarship awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Since starting the program in 1991, Union Plus has awarded more than \$3.7 million in educational funding to more than 2,500 union members, spouses and dependent children.

The 2016 Union Plus Scholarship application is now available at <http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/scholarships>. The application deadline is January 31, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. EST.

For more information about scholarships and other benefits available to AGMA members from Union Plus, visit UnionPlus.org. ♦



Elizabeth Coker

“A Day in the Life” is an ongoing series to acquaint members with the various categories that AGMA represents. This issue features A Day in the Life of Directors. If you are interested in contributing, please send your story to denise@musicalartists.org.

A Day in the Life of a Director

By Paul Curran



Perhaps the only thing typical about “A typical day in the life of a director” is the certainty of an “untypical” day. With most productions needing usually a year or more of planning, and the possibility of so many changes within that time frame, a director is kept on his or her feet most of the time responding to fluctuations in everything from budget to casting, to set building or possible cancellation. Today seemed as typical a day in many ways, so...

5:00 a.m. – Up and off to a meeting in Valencia, Spain. I’m actually back in England right now directing *Death in Venice* for Garsington Opera so I need to be



Paul Curran (Artistic Director of the Norwegian National Opera) goes back to his ballet roots with a Nutcracker cast member.

back for a 10:30 a.m. rehearsal tomorrow but, with a holiday weekend coming, the Intendant at Valencia, Davide Livermore, asked if I could come over for a day’s visit and discuss the production we will do next year. The car booked for 6:00 a.m. failed to show up so I was none too happy, but at least the threatened national rail strike was called off...

These days, if at all possible, I will try to take meetings by Skype or FaceTime—it saves hours, even days of travel and also saves companies a lot of money. But today I had to be in person for several reasons: I have never been in the theater in Valencia and, despite being invited in past years, have never been

there to see anything (dates clashed so I was not able to do it ... one of the most common occurrences in a director’s life “no work for 2017? No problem, offers will come in, for sure... usually all of them for the same six-week period meaning you have to choose one out of three and hope a similar ‘feast’ follows for the rest of the year”). Not knowing the actual stage means a site visit for sure. It also gives me a great chance to meet the team and the stage crew and see how they do things. We will also have a chance to work out how best to allocate the budget and to see how we can get the best quality show for the smallest budget possible. But it doesn’t always work out that cheapest is best...

Putting together a production is a different process for different directors. For me, it always begins with the music. My first step in taking on a piece is reading the piano score—no sound world just yet, just the notes and the words. I’ll try to do it uninterrupted (phone and computer off), then I’ll repeat it, this time with a recording. The recording adds the texture of the voices and the orchestra and enriches my now burgeoning fantasy world a little more.

As I listen I’ll also scribble down my first thoughts or reactions. Doesn’t matter what they are—though they are rarely “blocking” or stage business ideas—and they can be anything from questioning key changes to highlighting dynamics or particular words. Over 23 years, it still amazes me how often I return to my first impressions. Luckily, I speak several languages but, if I don’t speak the language of the opera (Czech for example), I will search and research every word till I understand it in context completely.

Midday – Meeting at the Opera House in Valencia. I meet with the Technical Director, who shows me the stage, auditorium and, equally importantly, the workshops, wardrobe areas and prop makers. All of this

inspires confidence that the project can be built in-house (reducing costs) and adjusted as needed. Next is a meeting with the rehearsal department, looking at the studio rehearsals as well as the main stage rehearsals with piano and orchestra. This is the period that can make or break a project. The opera in Valencia is Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* so it needs a lot of detailed orchestra rehearsal. I’m now very glad I got up at 5:00 a.m. as I’ve added two more stage and orchestras to their plans.

Discussions of a production with a designer begin with the vision of the director. What she or he feels about the piece, how it might look and what it might say to someone. Then a dialogue begins with the designer coming back with further ideas or developments of the initial conversation. Often a designer will bring to the table a brand new idea and that will start off a new discussion. For me, all avenues can be explored trying to find the best way to tell this particular story.

4:00 p.m. – A call from my agent. Rome Opera would like to take my *Traviata* production for next season—can I fly to Rome ASAP to discuss this? Well, no, I can’t! I need to get back to rehearsals of *Death in Venice*. I look in the diary and try to find dates to fly there when Gary McCann, the designer, is also free. It’s like trying to find a free lunch for a head of state! Finally we find a date and propose it to Rome—theater’s on holiday on that day, find another date. And so the same process... A date is found but will involve another 5:00 a.m. start plus flying back to London that night (and Gary flying on to Amsterdam, then Vienna). Don’t get me wrong, I am NOT complaining. There are a lot of jobs far more complicated and difficult than mine but, planes, trains and automobiles again for a fly in and out do eventually lose their charms when you’ve been doing it for 23 years...

11:30 p.m. – Land back in London, at Gatwick. The Gatwick Express train is cancelled so the trip will take twice as long but, having landed, it gives me a chance to catch up on the flood of emails from Valencia on rehearsals, casting and budget. I use the train, then cab trip, to try to “clear my Valencia inbox” before going to bed (at 2:00 a.m.).

9:00 a.m. – Message from the Garsington Opera. There is illness in the cast of *Così fan tutte* today so the understudies will have to go on, leaving me with no singers in the myriad of small roles in *Death in Venice*. Time to rethink the schedule. We start at 10:30 a.m.

Director Paul Curran's recent productions have been seen in New York, Bucharest, Seville, Venice, Ekaterinburg and London. Future engagements include productions of La traviata at Opera Philadelphia; the World Premiere of Becoming Santa Claus at Dallas Opera; A Midsummer Night's Dream at Palau Les Arts Valencia; La Cenerentola at Teatro San Carlo Napoli and Man of La Mancha at Central City Opera. www.paulcurrandirector.com ♦

AREA NEWS

NEW YORK

Homage to a Dance Career

By Christine McMillan, AGMA Governor and Metropolitan Opera Dancer



Linda Gelinás left her New Hampshire home at 16 years old for a job at Bagel Nosh and a scholarship at Joffrey Ballet. After dancing for several ballet companies, she found herself at the Metropolitan Opera. A career as a dancer is notoriously short, and little did she realize then that she would dance on the Met stage and tour the world with them for 35 years. Her performances number in the thousands, including 436 soloist performances. She is full of strength, power, passion, and grace, but what sets Linda apart is her dedication to the art coupled with her generosity of spirit. She is the first to welcome new dancers (hundreds of them) and smooth their way into the complex organism that is the Met. In revivals, she is sought after for her first-hand knowledge of the choreographer's intent and style. In every class, rehearsal and performance, her energy seems boundless, inspiring everyone around her. Her presence on the Met stage and in rehearsals will be greatly missed. ♦



Backstage, after the Metropolitan Opera's last Aida of the season, celebrating Linda Gelinás' 35 years as a dancer on the Met stage



On May 22 AGMA Membership Department Supervisor Candace Itow and AGMA Recording Secretary Louis Perry attended the New York City Opera Alumni Reunion at Atlantic Grill restaurant.

When asked, “How do you use technology?”, a reader said, “I use my iPad extensively to manage my sheet music and recordings to learn repertoire regardless of location, time of day, or company.”

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By James Guthrie, Southern California Area Chair



AGMA and Los Angeles Opera (LAO) continue to help opera flourish with new works, free concerts and traditional opera in the Los Angeles Area. Keep your eye on LAO's 2015-16 season as it celebrates its 30th Year Anniversary, but here is a sneak peek of what happened in its 29th year.

Wonderful Opera Weekend (WOW)

Los Angeles Opera offered an outstanding Opera Weekend in February of this year. On February 27 and 28, 2015, Los Angeles Opera Chorus made its debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Disney Hall in the West Coast Premiere of *Alice in Wonderland* by Unsuk Chin. Forty members of the LA Opera Chorus appeared for two nights in a semi-staged production. Across the street at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion on February 27, LA Opera Chorus Men were heard in *The Barber of Seville*. While on Sunday, March 1, the LA Opera Chorus was heard in *The Ghost of Versailles*. Los Angeles was the place to be for a Wonderful Opera Weekend (WOW).



Several members of the Los Angeles Opera chorus of *Alice in Wonderland*, left to right: Veronica Christenson, Gabriel Manro, Aleta Braxton, Renee Sousa, Arnold Geis, Todd Strange and, in center, Chorus Master Grant Gershon.

Free Opera Chorus Concerts

Los Angeles Opera presented a Great Opera Chorus concert under the "LA Opera Off Grand" series with 32 members of the LAO Chorus, two members of the production staff, and members of Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program on Saturday, March 14. The



The chorus performing an LA Opera Off Grand concert.

two concerts in one afternoon were free to the public, under the direction of Resident Conductor Grant Gershon with Associate Chorus Master Jeremy Frank at the keyboard, and included an audience Sing-Along for several selections. The Great Opera Chorus was held at the Valley Performing Art Center at Cal State University in Northridge.

Developing new audiences for opera is a joint partnership with LAO and AGMA, and this concert was the second Annual Event. The LAO Chorus was granted a waiver for reduced rates to help offset expenses and make the free concerts a reality. The audiences provided a wall of sound filled with joy, laughter and smiles—what a fun concert experience for all.

Los Angeles Opera Ends Season

Los Angeles Opera completed their 2014-15 Season with *The Marriage of Figaro*. Twenty-four members of the LA Opera Chorus participated in the production. ♦



Chorus men from *Figaro* and the Chorus women from *Figaro* with Assistant Stage Manager Whitney Frazier McAnally.



Los Angeles Master Chorale

By Amy Fogerson, LAMC AGMA Delegate and Chorister



The Los Angeles Master Chorale (LAMC) closed its 51st season on May 17 with a concert of music by Arvo Pärt and Eric Whitacre, followed by a champagne reception. The season featured performances of different passion settings, including Richard Einhorn’s score for the silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (performed live with the film), Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with the period instrument orchestra Musica Angelica, and Tan Dun’s *Water Passion After St. Matthew*. The season also featured two world premieres: Nackkum Paik’s *Succession* and *Songs of Ascent* by AGMA member, LAMC tenor, and composer-in-residence Shawn Kirchner. Additionally, the ensemble provided a chorus for the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s performances of John Adams’ *Harmonium* and Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*.

This summer the Chorale will be performing four concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl: Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, a concert performance of Verdi’s *La traviata*, and a live-to-film performance of the score to *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

LAMC’s negotiating committee, comprised of Leanna Brand, Dylan Gentile, Scott Graff, Alice Kirwan Murray, Niké St. Clair, Kimberly Switzer, Elyse Willis, Delegate Amy Fogerson and AGMA’s Western Counsel John Russum finally completed nine long months of contract negotiations with management this year, with changes that will move the LAMC to a fully-paid ensemble by the 2017-18 season. It will be



LAMC singers celebrate after the final concert of the season, left to right: AGMA Delegate Amy Fogerson, Scott Lehmkuhl, Tamara Bevard, Associate Conductor Lesley Leighton, retiring chorister Christian Marcoe and Michele Hemmings.

the largest completely professional AGMA concert chorus in the United States.

In an effort to bring the LAMC’s marketing strategy up-to-date, choristers have proposed forming a social media task force that would coordinate singer and staff efforts to increase the LAMC’s profile online. The task force, composed of singers and members of management, will ramp up over the summer, and a new strategy aimed at giving subscribers and potential ticket-buyers a more personal relationship with the organization and its musicians will be rolled out in the fall. ♦



Shawn Kirchner

SAN FRANCISCO

By Nora Heiber, National Dance Executive



Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) completed negotiations for a three-year contract over one week in April. The negotiations were conducted with National Dance Executive Nora Heiber, PNB Executive Director Ellen Walker and Artistic Director Peter Boal. The new contract includes compensation increases each year and an additional guaranteed week of work as well as the introduction of a dancer guarantee. It also includes significant improvements to the physical therapy support the dancers will receive throughout the season. Left to right the negotiating committee members are Jonathan Porretta, James Moore, Kyle Davis, Carrie Imler and Maggie Mullin.

Ballet San Jose’s negotiating committee completed negotiations for a two-year contract on April 29. The committee met five times over the course of three months. Left to right, the committee members are Annali Rose, Ryan DeAlexandro, Aleksandra Meijer, Francisco Preciado, Lahna Vanderbush, Rudy Candia and Ommi Pipit-Suksun. ♦



Pacific Northwest Ballet negotiating committee



Ballet San Jose negotiating committee

CHICAGO/MIDWEST

By Cole Seaton, AGMA Governor, MMRC and Chicago/Midwest Area Committee Member and Chorister



The Chicago/Midwest Area members held their annual Area Meeting February 15 in Chicago with a full agenda to cover and over 40 members present. AGMA President and Chicago/Midwest Area Chair James Odom presided over the evening's affairs. Area Executive Officers were elected and we were sad to say farewell to one of our Chicago Area stalwarts and a distinguished AGMA member—3rd Vice President and MMRC Chair—Sara Stewart Schumann, who announced she would not be running for another term on the Board of Governors, after many years of distinguished service. We also received news from our Midwest Counsel, John Ward, regarding upcoming contract negotiations.



Area meeting attendees Ron Watkins, Luis Galvez, Sarah van der Ploeg, Daniel Henry and Lillian Murphy

How nice it was that each of our Area houses finished their respective seasons on a resounding high note! The Lyric Opera Chorus ended their season in May with the long-awaited and well-received production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, which featured opera great Denyce Graves as well as several stunningly voiced Broadway stars including Steven Pasquale and Laura Osnes, among others. The Lyric Opera Chorus will kick off their upcoming 2015-16 season with Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in September.

The Chicago Symphony Chorus (CSC), along with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, was warmly welcomed with much anticipation and fanfare to Carnegie Hall the first week of February, when they performed to a sold-out house and enthusiastic audience. The CSC ended up being treated to an extra day in the Big Apple due to blizzard conditions in Chicago and expected bad weather in New York City. So, this AGMA Governor tried to make a visit to the national office while in town, but found them closed due to the impending winter weather that only partially shut down the city that doesn't sleep! The CSC finished their season in May, as part of the magnificent three week "Reveries and Passions" French Festival, which featured the CSC singing Debussy's *La damoiselle élue* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* as well as Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. The full chorus will next take the stage in August, at the Ravinia Festival, performing a semi-staged concert version of Wagner's opera, *Der fliegende Holländer*. And our upcoming 2015-16 season will find the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus marking its 125th Anniversary! It will be quite a season... more info to follow!

Our incredibly talented colleagues at the Joffrey Ballet were very happy to have added a fifth production in their lineup this past season! New Works, which closed out the season in May, included three premieres: *In Creases*, from choreographer Justin Peck (music by Philip Glass); *Liturgy*, from choreographer Christopher Wheeldon (music by Arvo Pärt); and *Evenfall*, from choreographer Nicholas Blanc (music by Max Richter). A fourth work, *Incantations*, from choreographer Val Caniparoli (music by Alexandre Rabinovitch-Barakovsky) was also featured on the program. We also wish to congratulate this amazing dance troupe on 60 great years! This coming October, when the Joffrey Ballet begins their 2015-16 season, the company will be celebrating their 60th Anniversary season and have quite a great lineup in store. They will finish their season on April 15 with a 60th Anniversary Gala Performance.



Area meeting attendees Brian-Alwyn Newland, Ninah Snipes and Daryn Harrell

Over at the Grant Park Music Festival in Millennium Park our friends in the Grant Park Chorus began their season of music making on the weekend of June 19 with the world premiere of Kenji Bunch's Symphony No. 3: *Dream Songs*, inspired by Native American culture. This writer was fortunate to share this performance with several members of his visiting family! This ensemble will also be featured in the Midwest premiere of James MacMillan's

provocative work, *Quickening*, the last weekend in June. The chorus will perform Brahms' lush and moving *Ein deutsches Requiem* with soloists soprano Caitlin Lynch and bass-baritone Stephen Hegedus in mid-July, followed by their annual and beloved a cappella concerts performed masterfully by this sublime group of singers. These concerts always bring out the Chicago community to watch conductor Christopher Bell work his magic at two of the city's cultural iconic institutions, the magnificent South Shore Cultural Center and the Columbus Park Refectory. Their final concerts will be in August and will showcase the singers and soloists, first, in Haydn's rarely-performed *Harmoniemesse*, his last major work, followed later in the month by Elgar's oratorio, *The Kingdom*. Don't miss these concerts if you are visiting or live in Chicago! They're FREE!! ♦



Left to right are Amy Pickering (in front), AGMA Governor Sherry Veal, former AGMA 3rd Vice President and former MMRC Chair Sara Schumann, AGMA 1st Vice President and Work Rules and Contracts Committee Chair John Coleman, AGMA Governor Cole Seaton, AGMA President and Chicago/Midwest Area Chair Jimmy Odom and Midwest Counsel John Ward

PITTSBURGH



Our current production not only features the formidable talents of Lisette Oropesa (Marie), Lawrence Brownlee (Tonio), and Joyce Castle (Marquise of Berkenfeld), but includes two cast members from the 1986 production: chorister Rick Mikol and Kevin Glavin (this time appearing in the role of Sulpice) in a production from Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Pittsburgh Opera's last production of Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment* was in 1986 and featured none other than Dame Joan Sutherland as Marie. *Salut à la France!*



Eleven choristers in Pittsburgh Opera's March 2015 production of *Carmen* were "Carmen Newbies" (that is to say, it was their first fully-staged, professional *Carmen*). Front row, left to right are Valery Staskey, Samantha DeStefano, Anastasia Robinson, and Stacey Brett Conner; back row, left to right: Jordan Rininger, Eric Haines, Brian Doherty, Eric Garber, Jesse Lee Davis, J. Patrick McGill and Patrick Becker.

When asked "How do you use technology?", a reader said: "Put a post-it note on the computer that says 'Okay to send?' and read it before every send. It saves embarrassment."

WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE



The June 6, 2015, Washington/Baltimore Area Committee meeting was also attended by some Washington/Baltimore Governors. Seated, left to right, are Governors Vito Pietanza and Michelle Kunz, Area Committee member Laura Krause, and Governor Lynn Krynicky Bayer; standing: Mid-Atlantic Area Representative Eleni Kallas, Area Committee Chair Harvey Fort, Area Committee Vice Chair and 4th Vice President J Austin Bitner, Area Committee member Don Schramm, Governor Tim Augustin, Area Committee members Chip Coleman and Lisae Jordan, and Governor Barbara Stuckey.



In May, The Washington Ballet danced in ALICE (in wonderland); shown above is Tamako Miyazaki as Alice and Andile Ndlovu as the White Rabbit.

©Scott Suchman



Washington National Opera produced La Cenerentola in May. At the table are Shen Yang (Alidoro), Deborah Nansteel (Tisbe), Simone Alberghini (Dandini), Isabel Leonard (Angelina), Maxim Mironov (Don Ramiro), Jacqueline Echols (Clorinda) and Paolo Bordogna (Don Magnifico). The mice on the floor are played by AGMA dancers Alvaro Palau, Nancy Flores-Tirado, A. Maverick Lemons, Christopher Pennix, Monica Malanga and Damon Foster.



Ladies chorus members in Florida Grand Opera's 2015 production of The Pearl Fishers: Karen Feller, Danielle Krause, Veronica Fink Menvielle, Delegate Donna Lane Downey, Ravernna Mael and Linda Deighan; center front, C.J Baik.



AGMA and The Washington Ballet completed a successor collective bargaining agreement in just three days! Front row, left to right: Jonathan Jordan, Sona Kharatian, Corey Landolt, Elaine Kudo (Ballet Mistress), Brooklyn Mack, Ayano Kimura, Tamako Miyazaki, David Palmer (Associate Artistic Director), Septime Webre (Artistic Director), Eleni Kallas (Mid-Atlantic Area Representative and National Director of Organizing and Training); standing second row: Arthur Espinoza Jr. (Managing Director), Abbey Olson (Company Manager), Shakira Segundo (Chief Financial Officer and HR Director), Gian Carlo Perez, Kateryna Derechyna, Daniel Savetta and Tamas Krizsa.

Career Enhancement Tools in a “Social Media Age”

By Rodell Rosel, AGMA Governor, Chicago/Midwest Committee Member and Soloist



In this era, social media is a necessity in any aspect of life. Whether keeping in touch with friends, keeping in touch with society, or promoting one's services, including someone's career. The most used applications in social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Vine, among others. For me, personally, I use Facebook and Twitter, and rarely Instagram. For some of my colleagues, they also create a (written) blog, as well as a vlog (video blog). Most professional working singers, like me, have their own websites. On Facebook, in addition to a personal account/page, I also have a business account, also known as a fan page, to promote future performances. All of these types of social media can be integrated within each other through links and inter-application sharing.

We are in the “Social Media Age.” Facebook, Twitter, and even Instagram, are crucial to any performer's existence and relevance to the world of show business, of which opera is a part. They are not just a place to vent or share daily personal routines. They have become the best way to network, to advertise within the musical community, and to get to know other musical colleagues, without the pressure of face-to-face awkwardness. On Facebook, I have seen colleagues post questions about housing when travelling, the

best rates for flights, acquiring vocal scores and music, subbing for a church job, referrals for voice teachers and coaches, and the list goes on and on. It has become a one-stop shop for easy-fixes and easy-answer queries. Sometimes, being able to start a chat message with a fellow singer, director, or even a conductor, gives those people a chance to get to know the singer on a personal level, which hopefully later helps in referrals for future engagements and projects. Networking and referrals are everything to a singer. The importance of hitting “LIKE” on singers posts shows a singer's cleverness, humor and likeability. The more people like your posts, the more people will request you to be their friend. The more your Tweet gets retweeted, the more followers you acquire. This starts a domino effect, especially on Twitter. Hashtags and tags on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are now treated as a compliment to the person who is mentioned. The goal for any performer is to “trend” on any of these social media applications.

I believe in the power of exposure and networking, and the only way to fully achieve this is to join the “social media” bandwagon. Most of the successful opera singers today are on both Facebook and Twitter, and have both personal accounts and fan pages. This is not just about being famous as an individual; it is the best way to keep the art of classical and opera music alive. If people talk about it or ask about it, it's alive. ♦

Before you Tweet, Post or Text, remember to THINK!

T = IS IT TRUE? **H** = IS IT HURTFUL? **I** = IS IT ILLEGAL? **N** = IS IT NECESSARY? **K** = IS IT KIND?

IN MEMORIAM

Sandra Bernhard, Director

Mario Bertolino, Soloist

John-David Broome, Chorister

Oleg Bryjak, Soloist

Nico Castel, Soloist

Irene Dalis-Loinaz, Soloist

Irwin Densen, Soloist

Michael Gallup, Soloist

Irving Guttman, Director

Bodo Igesz, Director

James E. Jeffrey, Chorister

Waldemar Kmentt, Soloist

John Kuhn, Soloist

Rick Lusby, Chorister

Brian MacDonald, Director/

Choreographer

Janis Martin, Soloist

Patricia Minton, Chorister

Elena Obraztsova, Soloist

Maya Plisetskaya, Dancer

Frank Porretta, Soloist

Maria Radner, Soloist

Jean Redpath, Chorister

Rebecca Rosales, Chorister

Carlo Scibelli, Soloist

Mitchell Sendrowitz, Chorister

Stephen Speed, Choreographer

Vadim Strukov, Dancer

Elizabeth Walker, Chorister

Mallory Walker, Soloist

John Calvin West, Soloist

Ashley Howard Wilkinson,

Soloist

Dudley Williams, Dancer

Don Yule, Soloist

Tech Meets Life in a Stage Director's Day

By Garnett R. Bruce



Like all freelance artists, the time between gigs becomes development of upcoming work, study time and networking. With operas planned years in advance, my preparation is a slow boil of reading, listening, researching and daydreaming, punctuated by a day here and there of intense dialogue and creativity when designing, scheduling and casting. Often a team will make design presentations and then not see one another again until six or nine months later in tech week! So, we rely on our technology to stay connected.

My directing colleagues and I seem to be constantly trading e-mails, Facebook messages, texts, and lately, Dropbox and



The Tosca stage at Lyric Opera of Kansas City's Kauffman Center.

Pinterest files, Google hangouts with far-flung cast members, and certainly Skype conversations. Rarely is there a typical day. Everyone is working to tell the same story, use the time as efficiently as possible, and hopefully focus the art at hand towards some greater understanding.

When I'm rehearsing, I begin my day by breezing through morning headlines, listen-

ing to a bit of NPR over breakfast, and mapping out in greater detail the logistics of next couple days—usually in hopes of finding a bit more time for matters that need attention. If I can, I then like to take a walk, hike or bike ride with my iPod in hand, which lets me refresh the scene or act we're staging today. After coffee, I often touch base with the conductor so we can agree on priorities. The hour right before rehearsal is a check in on the rehearsal room and stage management, and often a “drive by” of convenient departments—wardrobe, props, marketing/PR, lighting—usually just to say hello and check on progress or any notes.

But how many of us are just doing one show at a time? Lunch and dinner breaks become the times to coordinate with future planning. So, here's where technology helps to keep the wheels turning. My colleague Gregory Fortner was recently coordinating a design process for a new work between Beijing, Montreal, Los Angeles and Vienna using the various setups: GoToMeeting, BlueJeans, Dropbox, WebEx and Skype, sharing screens with images and drawings—and even creating video-docs of the workshops with the composer organizing a rough-cut of the work-to-date for all to see and hear.

Amy Hutchison and Ned Canty remarked how much they rely on Pinterest and Google Images in gathering and sharing inspiration for a production. For an upcoming *Aida*, my costume designer has pieced together hundreds of images—from color tints to contemporary interpretations of ancient silhouettes. We'll have a face-to-face meeting next month, but in the meantime, the comments on our Dropbox images and our continued dialogue have been enormously rewarding.

For musical preparation, Rebecca Herman finds YouTube a great help (even if it's a bit of a rabbit hole sometimes!). Hearing and seeing how different singers approach tempi, phrasing, etc. saves the expense and hassle of finding a bunch of recordings. Sometimes there's an inserted aria or sequence that's not

on my recording (say, “Cessa” from *Barber of Seville*) and pulling down a quick clip is a good solution. I've always been a fan of listening to the operas in the car. Road trips are helpful in linking up the longer arcs of the score. *Carmen* and *Meistersinger* will get you across Kansas! *Rosenkavalier* covers the Houston to Dallas drive nicely. And *Gianni Schicchi* propels you on the last 48 minutes of a long day at the wheel.

While I'm still a pencil and paper director, those of us tired of lugging around weighty books are very much in favor of online sources. The best for study right now is forScore, but perhaps as technology evolves, there could be one score in the cloud that everyone uses and annotates from their tablet: stage management, lighting designer, rehearsal pianist, supertitles, video/streaming director, etc. We'd save hours in front of a photocopier and thousands of pages in 3-ring binders! How many times have we wasted precious minutes figuring out where to “pick up” in a rehearsal—especially a repetitive Rossini or Verdi score? Hopefully, battery life in the tablet will be good enough to last through a long day of tech!

In stage designs, the 21st century audience seems to respond better to swift changes of locale rather than sitting through a “curtain down” scene change. Projection technology has certainly helped these transitions become more streamlined—but they bring their own set of challenges. A replacement lamp for a projector strong enough to maintain an image across a backdrop can cost \$8,000 or \$9,000—a budget surprise no one wants! Projector focus time is also a consideration—since a blurry or sloppy projection cheapens everyone's work. Finding “dark time” onstage to focus (especially in rep) is more challenging than one might think. Our eyes are used to high definition imagery, so we are able to spot a cheap imitation quickly. And, at times, it means we wait until the 11th hour to make a decision about something—always the most expensive time to change gears! And then, there's the inevitable obsolescence of

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The Old-Fashioned Way Still Works

By Osceola Davis, AGMA Governor, New York Area Committee Member and Soloist



When Oprah Winfrey interviewed three teenagers on her talk show, one of her young guests frequently used the term, “back in the old days.” Finally, Ms. Winfrey asked the young lady to clarify her term. Her reply was something like, “Well, way back in the late ’70’s...” With that comment the audience laughed. Then Ms. Winfrey commented, “It hasn’t been *that* far back.”

How did we survive when the Lone Ranger rode with Tonto and Superman used a telephone booth for his dynamic change? That era is gone. Today everything is quick, immediate. This is the electronic age, where computers can reproduce usable tools with the aid of a simple photo.

Technology has come an extremely long way and its progress is non-ending. Business cards still have their purpose and telephones still work. However, now we can see to whom we are talking, including more than one person at once. We carry our phones everywhere we go and can even text messages via our phones. Fantastic! This is normal for the twenty-first century.

It probably sounds strange to hear one admit that they are surviving today’s society without a Facebook account. I happen to be such a person. Granted, I’m not flying as often across the ocean as I used to and I’m not hopping from coast to coast. My performing invitations arrive by email or phone and a lot of my time is spent teaching voice at New York’s Lehman College. I don’t feel at a loss because the “old-fashioned way” still works for me. ♦

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the technology. Over four years of preparation and performances went into Jun Kaneko’s *Magic Flute* designs. The entire three-hour evening is broken up into literally thousands of sequences to coordinate for tempo and intensity at each of the co-production venues. Necessary updating of original servers and processors has mandated costly rewriting of the codes for the imagery. All those hours, those costs, result in a high definition visual fluidity that can connect us more vividly to Mozart’s mercurial music and text.

Gregory and Ned both mention they look forward to technology that is evolving—everything from supertitles linked to Google Glass to 3D visuals that help create a unique audience experience in and around our opera. I’m an advocate for the audience (is that idea clear? am I bored?) and composer (what was his/her goal? How does this scene balance with the overall work?). Anything we can do to bring everyone onto the same page is a welcome advancement and opportunity

to connect our art to our audience. How can this technology help rather than hinder the process? The answer is: consistent communication about goals—and planning ahead of time to achieve them.

A typical rehearsal day will end with notes after the cast and music staff have finished.

Stage management stays even longer to process and communicate everything we’ve discussed to various departments. I’ll head out for a drink with cast or staff when possible—but often, the evenings are reserved for translating, writing assignments and replies to the day’s e-mails in a hopefully thoughtful manner—trying to stay one or two steps ahead of the next show on the calendar. I do my best thinking when I don’t have a deadline except my own need to sleep—and there’s no technology (yet) that can replace that! But I do rest easier than 15 years ago thanks to all the tools that connect me to the wider world.



© Copy: Weaver/Courtesy of Garnett Bruce

Earlier this year, Garnett coached soprano Melody Moore during a *Tosca* rehearsal at Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Stage Director Garnett Bruce is a familiar presence at major houses around the country, recently at San Francisco, Washington National, and Lyric Opera of Chicago as well as regional houses such as Austin, Utah and Kansas City. He serves on the faculty at Peabody Conservatory and participates most summers at the Aspen Music Festival and School. www.garnettbruce.com ♦

AGMA Relief Fund Audited Financials

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Trustees of AGMA Relief Fund

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of AGMA Relief Fund (the "Fund") which comprise the statements of financial position as of September 30, 2014 and 2013, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended.

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of AGMA Relief Fund as of September 30, 2014 and 2013, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. Such information is the responsibility of the Fund's management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material aspects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

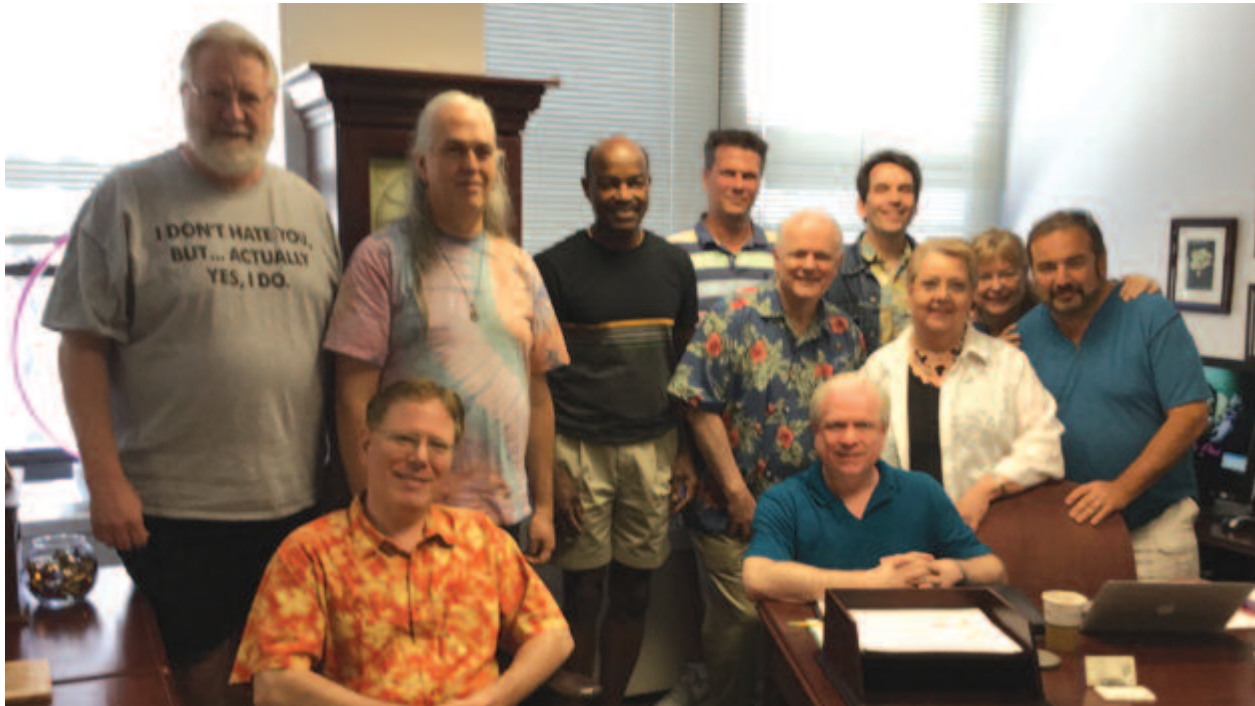
BUCHBINDER TUNICK & COMPANY LLP

AGMA Relief Fund Statements of Financial Position September 30, 2014 and 2013

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
ASSETS		
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 271,016	\$ 272,538
Interest and dividends receivable	1,185	1,425
Due from affiliate	<u>4,827</u>	<u>5,450</u>
	<u>277,028</u>	<u>279,413</u>
Investments, at fair value:		
U.S. government and governmental agencies obligations	32,777	32,572
Corporate bonds	50,586	102,841
Common stocks	362,581	320,051
Mutual and exchange-traded funds	<u>666,933</u>	<u>584,827</u>
Total investments	<u>1,112,877</u>	<u>1,040,291</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 1,389,905</u>	<u>\$ 1,319,704</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 29,462	\$ 26,280
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	<u>1,360,443</u>	<u>1,293,424</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 1,389,905</u>	<u>\$ 1,319,704</u>

AGMA Relief Fund Statements of Activities: For the years ended September 30, 2014 and 2013

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Revenue:		
Contributions:		
Theatre Authority, Inc.	\$ 14,000	\$ 15,233
Corporations and foundations	32,000	36,679
Individuals	10,199	3,002
Holiday drive	16,402	18,225
Special events	<u>2,565</u>	<u>9,825</u>
	<u>75,166</u>	<u>82,964</u>
Investment income:		
Interest and dividends	31,731	31,547
Unrealized gain on investments	41,102	21,553
Realized net gain on sale of investments	<u>17,077</u>	<u>36,347</u>
Net investment income	<u>89,910</u>	<u>89,447</u>
Total revenue	<u>165,076</u>	<u>172,411</u>
Expenses:		
Program services:		
Member assistance	20,990	18,690
Supporting services:		
General and administrative expenses	70,942	69,516
Fundraising	<u>6,125</u>	<u>4,112</u>
Total expenses	<u>98,057</u>	<u>92,318</u>
Change in net assets	67,019	80,093
Net assets unrestricted:		
Beginning of year	<u>1,293,424</u>	<u>1,213,331</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 1,360,443</u>	<u>\$ 1,293,424</u>



The annual Leadership Conference was held in New York June 21-22. Shown above are, left to right, seated: Bill Buchanan (Pittsburgh Area Chair) and Jimmy Odom (AGMA President and Chicago/Midwest Area Chair); standing: Gregory Stapp (2nd Vice President and Administration and Policy Committee Chair), Matt Woodbury (Texas/Oklahoma Board Member), George Scott (3rd Vice President and Northwest Area Chair), Tim Smith (Membership and Member Relations Committee Acting Chair), Louis Perry (Recording Secretary), John Coleman (1st Vice President and Work Rules and Contracts Committee Chair), Jane Shaulis (5th Vice President), Linda Mays (former AGMA President), and Jim Guthrie (Southern California Area Chair). In attendance at the conference but not pictured were Gerry Angel (Director of Operations), Julie Condy (New Orleans Area Chair), Alan Gordon (National Executive Director), Candace Itow (Membership Department Supervisor) and Ray Menard (Treasurer).

Did you know that auditions for AGMA signatory companies can be found on AGMA’s website www.musicalartists.org under Auditions, then listed by category: Opera, Dance, Concert and Production Staff? Check it out today!

AGMA Relief Fund Audited Financials (continued from page 22)

AGMA Relief Fund Statements of Cash Flows: For the years ended September 30, 2014 and 2013

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>		<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Cash flows from operating activities:			Cash flows from investing activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 67,019	\$ 80,093	Proceeds from redemption and sales of investments	144,467	300,750
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:			(Purchase of) investments	(158,874)	(442,009)
Unrealized (gain) on investments	(41,102)	(21,553)	Net cash (used in) investing activities	(14,407)	(141,259)
Realized net (gain) on sale of investments	(17,077)	(36,347)	Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,522)	(120,200)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:			Cash and cash equivalents:		
Decrease in contributions receivable	-	3,208	Beginning of year	272,538	392,738
Decrease in interest and dividends receivable	240	573	End of year	\$ 271,016	\$ 272,538
Decrease (increase) in due from affiliate	623	(960)			
Increase (decrease) in accounts payable	3,182	(3,955)			
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>12,885</u>	<u>21,059</u>			

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The Actors Fund - Central Region	(312) 372-0989 (800) 221-7303	dtowne@actorsfund.org
The Actors Fund - Western Region	(323) 933-9244 (800) 221-7303	intakela@actorsfund.org
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The Actors Work Program - New York	(212) 354-5480	blevinso@actorsfund.org
The Actors Work Program - Los Angeles	(323) 933-9244	csorenson@actorsfund.org
AGMA Relief Fund - Donations	(800) 543-AGMA (2462)	susan@musicalartists.org
AGMA Relief Fund - Intake East	(212) 221-7300 ext. 119 or (800) 221-7303	
AGMA Relief Fund - Intake Midwest	(312) 372-0989 or (800) 221-7303	
AGMA Relief Fund - Intake West	(323) 933-9244 ext. 55 or (800) 221-7303	
AGMA Retirement and Health (Plan A, AGMA Retirement Plan and AGMA Health Plan)	(212) 765-3664	www.agmaretirement-health.org agmaretirement_health@yahoo.com
AGMA Health Plan B ("Administrative Services Only")	(866) 263-1185 (Toll free) (516) 396-5543 (Outside of the U.S.)	www.asonet.com
Artists Health Insurance Resource Center - NY	(917) 281-5975	www.ahirc.org
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